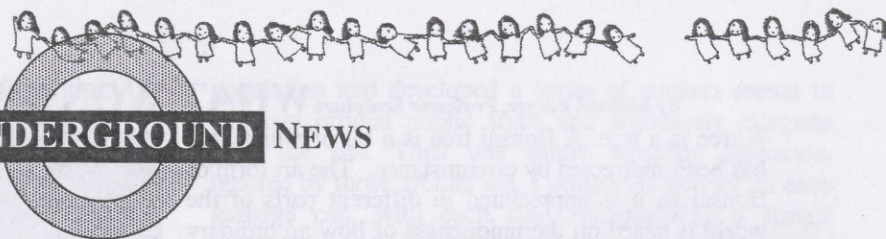


## SFAI UNDERGROUND NEWS



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Contributors: Richard Berger, Featured Alumni Lin Evola, Heather Gold, Featured Grad Betsy Lam, Featured Undergrad Nate Orman, Meg McGuire, Meghan Rigali, Jeff Wilson, Editor Kevin Bonness, Faculty Advisor Ray Mondini

### Boycott John Lang's Methods A Course see page 7

## The WASC Accreditation Report: What is Your Diploma Worth? by Kevin Bonness

Accreditation means that your degree has a recognized value and will be accepted in the application for other degrees and teaching positions. The San Francisco Art Institute is now taking part in a multi-year accreditation process. The recently issued report by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges states that SFAI has been operating beneath the accreditation threshold in many areas.

Readers of the SFAI Underground News will now be familiar with many of the general issues that have endangered our accreditation. Echoing our recent Department Heads article, the WASC report states that "from all accounts, the nature of university governance was very top down under the previous administration . . . This created a high level of distrust and a basic violation of basic shared governance behaviors" (20). The WASC report further indicates that this situation has not come to an end with the current administration stating that "the damage has been done and will not be erased in a short period of time. The Board and Administration must truly commit themselves to a long term of strategy of transparency and quickly work to implement a shared governance structure appropriate for this institution. Particularly in the area of the faculty's role in governance what needs to be reversed seems to be at least decade-long behaviors" (20). The report continues stating that,

at SFAI, the appearance of faculty governance is provided by the existence of the Faculty Senate and the Faculty Union. However, in practice, faculty are not functioning in ways that suggest that they are responsible for the curriculum and it appears they are not always involved in key decision making about new programs. The Curriculum Committees are not Faculty Senate Committees and are, instead, committees of faculty appointed by administration. A parallel situation is also found in faculty review (28).



That these decisions are not made by the faculty means that they are not made by those who have the appropriate academic training to make them. The current situation in which such decisions are made by the Administration exclusively or by committees they themselves select, circumvents the checks and balances which would protect against administration autocracy. Governance at SFAI remains securely top down. It is for these reasons that the WASC report states that there is a significant level of wariness when the administration asserts that SFAI has entered upon a "new Spirit" of cooperation or as a faculty member puts it, "they say we are being included but we don't know what language they are speaking."

The other area that the WASC report focuses upon is board oversight, which is the subject of a major article in the last issue of the SFAI Underground News. As the WASC report states, "the net effect of the Board failure to provide oversight to the budget has been a financial crisis of dramatic proportions" (26). "Over the several years that the financial situation of SFAI was deteriorating, it appears that the Board did not provide appropriate monitoring of the financial status of the school and that the situation was allowed to reach crisis proportions before it was even noticed" (23). Perhaps most revealingly, the team reported that "it is clear that the Chair of the Finance Committee raised substantive questions that should have alerted the Board to the increasingly dire situation. This individual informed the Team that he was essentially ostracized for raising these issues" (20).

As an overall assessment the report states that "the college's leadership system appears to be operating below the threshold for the requirements of CRF (the Code of Federal Regulations) . . . the net effect over time has been a chronic lack of operational leadership on the Board or Administrative level that is sufficient to enable to SFAI to implement a management system capable of sophisticated and responsible long range planning, with realistic budgeting, and development of an institutional culture of genuine teamwork" (9).

Will SFAI retain its status as an accredited college? In all likelihood the administration will do the bare minimum to scrape by. Why? Because it is in their interest to keep the institution alive and also their salaries, positions and dominance protected. But for real change it is more important than ever that SFAI students and faculty demand actual rather than pretended inclusion in school governance.



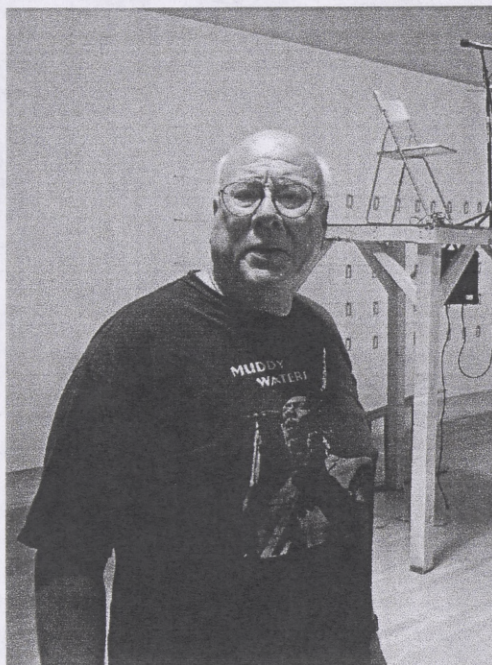
By Richard Berger, Professor Sculpture

## WHAT WON'T FIT IN A SPREADSHEET

A tree is a tree. A Bonsai tree is a bit of nature that has been redirected by circumstance. The art form of Bonsai as it is appreciated in different parts of the world is based on the uniqueness of how an ordinary tree might grow under extraordinary circumstances. A natural Bonsai, the inspiration for the formal Art of Bonsai, may grow in a niche high up on a cliff, perhaps at a place where airborne dust and moisture have had the opportunity to collect. A seed that ends up there via the wind or a bird will sprout and grow to reflect its improbable surrounding from the instant of its germination. Its trunk will diagram the cell-by-cell compromise between gravity and nourishment as it arches toward optimal light, a vital signature of cantilevering and anchorage as they organize to sustain life, to survive. People are compelled to contemplate this living diagram of extraordinary circumstances. They want to learn from its being because of the total singularity it represents even though it is also related to thousands or millions of other trees. The downside of these wondrous adaptations is their profound vulnerability. They cannot be moved to another location because in a sense they ARE their location, and the singularity of their existence as expressed in their beings hinges on the cumulative evidence of time and place on that being. What makes them unlike any other expressions of this same intersection of time and place is something quite elusive, perhaps the sum total of their being is poetic, a presence which must resonate within a receptive imagination to exist at all.

I was asked by some French art students to discuss an installation I had done in their neighborhood that consisted of a mechanically animated translucent plastic marionette and a high wattage theater light that cast the shadow of its motion on the wall of a room in their local 800-year-old chateau. My response to them was that I was joining, self consciously, the nearly continuous parade of occupants whose shadows AND tracteries had made the old chateau the "place" that it is today. By that I meant that in the same way that the fall of light bleaches colors, burns images on a video monitor and determines the growth of a natural bonsai, the cumulative shadows of the lives in the chateau, via torch light, candle light, gas light, day light and electric light had left their tracteries on the walls, creating a diffuse but indelible presence, at once intimate and immense in that enduring place, of the lives that had passed through there since 1320.

That is my account for what forces I was addressing in my installation and also my belief that those are the forces that make one place riveting and compelling and another illegible or inert. I would add a cursory paraphrase of a central thesis in Gaston Bachelard's Poetics of Space which states that the shelter and



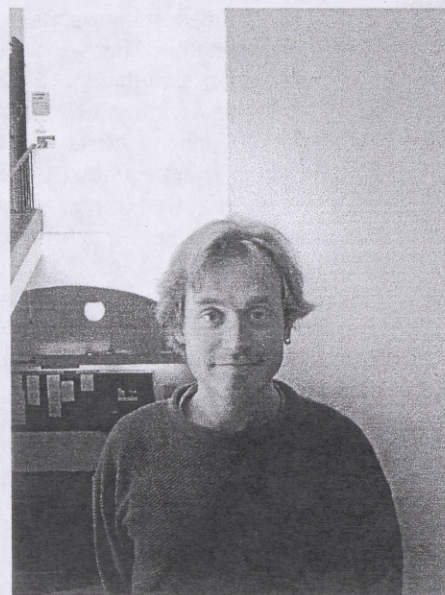
sustenance provided by the "home" allows someone a safe place to daydream. He of course meant not idle wool gathering, but daydreaming as the necessary psychic refuge we instinctively seek where the way things are momentarily loosen their grip on the way things ought to be, he meant reverie. The chateau was a place of physical refuge, a place where people gathered under siege, where there were parties, intrigue, probably a few murders, brutality, banality but above all, the refuge where one could daydream.

After thirty two years of employment at the San Francisco Art Institute I can say that this place reflects the culture of the Chateau, and the nature of the Bonsai. This has been a natural singularity which has catalyzed the poetic imagination. This is the place that people are drawn to because of what is both indelible and diffuse about its being, the sense that dreaming happens here and that it has left its traces in the same way that a parade of shadows animates a place by making all of its past a presence, an immediacy. That presence was never the intention of any of the many contributors to its being, yet they all dreamed here.

## Don't Eat the Nappy Fish

by Nate Orman

Down on the Embarcadero at Pier 7, where the skaters test their skills on cement blocks, might be an unlikely site for fine art in its usual forms. However, this

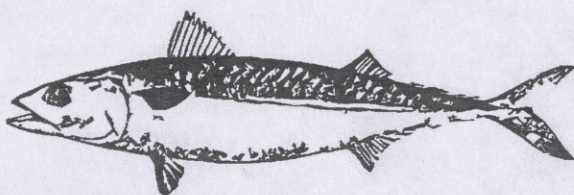




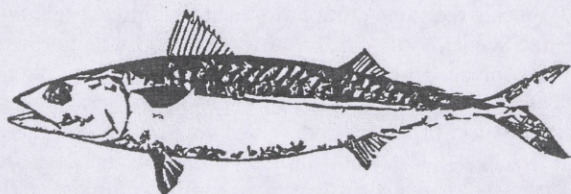
quiet pier typically draws a modest crowd of fishermen, which offered an opportunity for making a statement using less-traditional means. I discovered the site one afternoon cycling down the waterfront, attracted by the beautiful view of the bay, and noticed two things: the fishermen were catching lots of fish, and each of the eleven garbage cans on the pier had a 6" x 6" square metal plate on the side. (always carry a tape measure.)

Fishing off Pier 7 is an officially sanctioned activity, demonstrated by the presence of sink facilities for cleaning fish. However, the health hazards for eating polluted bay fish have been studied in detail, and there are clear advisories for which fish to eat and how much one can safely consume. But that information helps no one if it's communicated poorly, and the lack of warnings pushed my artist and activist buttons.

So I did some research about the current health warnings and the ethnic background of the bay fishermen



**San Francisco Bay receives effluents from 46 publicly owned wastewater treatment plants, 65 large industrial discharges, and as much as 40,000 tons of at least 65 contaminants each year. Many of these are toxic to plants or animals or pose threats to human health. Contamination by silver, cadmium, lead, and selenium is especially high.**



**Fish from San Francisco Bay are no longer sold at retail markets, but they are eaten by many people who fish the bay. 70 percent of bay anglers are people of color, according to surveys done by Save the Bay, a regional non-profit bay protection group. Available data indicate that Asians eat bay fish most frequently, followed by Latinos.**

population and developed a series of stickers meant to simulate official public signs and seamlessly integrate with the site. Then one sunny weekday afternoon, ignored by those around me, I posted the notices on each garbage can, with each sign encapsulating a simple message about consuming bay fish. (Sadly, when I approached the five or six guys actively fishing that day, not one spoke English. I'm investigating making Cantonese versions of these signs to target that specific audience.)

A month later the signs persist. If you're down on the Embarcadero some sunny day, check out the work, and keep your eyes open for new sites. If you like this type of work, this city is full of opportunities for all sorts of art and commentary.

so, if you could claim a way to rearrange your day what way would you move into that groove... side step to the left if you're deft slide it back and around to the north part of town underground where the sounds mechanical wave just resonated thru the concrete over the heads of most pedestrians no longer equestrians riding the trail now they ride the electric rail or iron horse on four wheels mostly of course with the comfortable seat and the cd playing portable container for the comfort obtainer or you could walk up the road with your whistle and your toad named bill until you still and see the pond where the toad belongs you set him free he hops away and clings a bug to his long pink mug you see the sun reflect off the water hear the birds tweet their singing words and the way the leaves rustle in the trees sure does ease the mind no time like the present to start this descent into the light either way you might be right to find your own place in or out of the race which ever you please you'll find harmonies and contradiction fact and fiction don't remain a victim of your experience share the variance with your brother respect your mother and the others you will meet let the music move your feet i repeat let the music move your feet so nice to feel your beat and greet the air with elegant flair or clumsy steps outside no need to hide this smile let its contagious style turn you up to share this cup of the divine you may be pushing buttons in an elevator bank you may be smoking buds that stank you may be working at a computer you may be a suburban commuter you could be walking a rocky trail or chasing a little snail you could be sitting in a cubicle feeling full of inspiration you could be visiting from a foreign nation you could be a long lost relationship returned or a descendant of one who got burned you could be fixing hair studying vanity you could be recording raps with mad profanity playing the stock market fat or you could be doing none of that what would you do if you could choose? With a little time you might possibly find that you Become what you became in your mind.

mpmcguire







## Featured Alumni Lin Evola

Lin Evola is an Artist who creates positive change in communities beleaguered by violence such as Los Angeles and Johannesburg. From handguns to decommissioned nuclear missile casings, Lin uses the metals of local weaponry to forge large scale Peace Angel sculptures which serve as inspirational symbols of change, transforming instruments of violence into instruments of peace. The following is a transcription of Lin's words, spoken one afternoon in Pete's cafe.

My name is Lin Evola. I got my Bachelor's degree here in 1976. I received my Master's Degree in 1990. I had traveled throughout the United States and the only school I wanted to go to was the San Francisco Art Institute. I paid my own way undergraduate and received the loans I needed for the master's program. This place is a place of life: it is visceral. It is not a place you go to just get a degree because you can go to so many other places. It is a place you come to if you really want to be an artist. There is no other reason to come here and because of that it has been a bastion of magic for as long as it has been open. You come here because there is magic and magic supercedes everything else. When I was a young person at Santa Clara University my uncle was the dean of the school. That was 1972 and they were very conservative, very Catholic and I met a man there named Paul Kos, I was talking anatomy classes and I was trying to really learn how to draw and Paul Kos said to me, "are you going to become a great artist or are you going to draw? Are you going to let drawing hold you back?" I was stunned because I thought drawing was how you got there. He said, "I want you to look up Sam Tchakalian and go to the Art Institute" and I did. Against my family's wishes, which I think is a prerequisite to going to the San Francisco Art Institute; to go against your family's and everyone else's wishes to be here for the magic of being here. When I came here I was stunned to be in a place that was all about being an artist. The rules were different. What you talked about was different .the way was different and no one really had homework then because the rules were harder here. You couldn't become an artist because you did A, B, C and D. You became an artist because you were an artist and you couldn't stop making art. It wasn't the other way around. So after I went to school here, I thought I would learn about finances. I wanted to learn about money how you make a living. I have probably had a life that was similar to that of many artists with marriages, children and work. But I never stopped being an artist even when I had jobs to support myself; I had openings in Paris, Los Angeles and Chicago. I never stopped being an artist. They used to say in the master's program here that it is like the army - they break you down to build you back up again, and it was the toughest thing I had ever been through in all of the years of my going to college. It was so very difficult because it challenged who you were as a person. When Franklin Williams looked at me and said; "why are you here? If you have had all of these shows around the world, why

are you here?" I said "because I couldn't break through, I couldn't break through the surface." Now, how many people would understand that? But I was very upset because I knew it was true. And in that two-and-a-half years, I did just that, I broke through. That is all I wanted to do, that one thing so that I could really, really complete myself as an artist inside. When I graduated I had taught here for three years and had more exhibitions in the Diego than anyone else but afterwards I could never after that connect with the school. All of a sudden I was an Alumni and there was no venue for me to participate. It was really odd to me. I didn't understand it. Although I had had 18 exhibitions in three cities in two countries in a year and a half, I could never connect here. So I went the route of staying away from the Art Institute after having invested so much and done so well. I got no encouragement form the school and no encouragement from the gallery. So I have traveled all over the world at this point. I have met with presidents and other leaders in many countries (such as Archbishop Desmond Tutu pictured above). I have received a site in Los Angeles near the train station on Alvarado Street for the Los Angeles Peace Angel. I have worked almost ten years on this project. The Los Angeles police department and the sheriff's department will be giving us weapons for the next two years. The Sheriffs department has offered all of the weapons from half of California to make the Los Angeles Peace Angel. The Bronx borough president has done the same in New York and requested a Peace Angel for New York City to go in front of the Justice Department. That will bring in weapons from the five bureaus and possibly the entire tri-state area. This Peace Angels project has its source in the San Francisco Art Institute. Ray Mondini used to talk about the Olympian pose in which painting patrons would take the poses of Greek gods, to identify with these higher, divine qualities. This was the last bastion for freedom and high spirit. What I have been understanding though the grapevine about what has been happening here, hasn't surprised me because I am only one person; if don't feel like there is any connection here, I mean I am not anyone special, the same thing must be happening to other artists. This is not the academy of Art. If you want to go there, go there but that is not this place. This is a place of high magic where people become great by just being around the people who are here. The greatest artists in the world have taught here and walked through these halls and been



students here so if that's being destroyed here, there is no Art Institute. I am heartbroken to find out that Sam Tchakalian and Franklin Williams are not here anymore. I am really grateful that Carlos Villa is still here and Paul Kos. I don't understand how they could try to get rid of Ray Mondini. These are Jewels of the school. How could they try to get rid of someone who is a jewel and part of this school? The administration is trying to control artists but what this school is based on is the freedom of the greatest assets of the school - its teachers. This is not a corporate school; you don't go to school here to lean about being a graphic artist and get a good job. That isn't the way this place is; this is a place for making artists. If it changes that it is going to loose everything



## Spike Please

By Meghan Rigali

I often find myself watching pigeons  
when that happens I just don't know what to do  
they're always doing something of interest  
and I am but a witness to whom their actions become gifts

Pigeons are one of the only animals I see regularly in the city  
whose lives are not of interest to human beings  
Maybe I'm not human because of my fascination,  
I'll never know until I'm so old I can add up my own consensus

until then I plan on enjoying the sight of one legged pigeons  
pegging around sidewalks seeking to prove  
cigarette butts are food  
and those spiky burglar systems on building ledges and hotel signs  
were really designed, (as I thought!)  
to prevent half humans from being somewhere they aren't supposed to be

Maybe I can see my own dangling legs kicking from unusual human perches  
and that's why I pay attention  
to the unlikeliness of human protection  
from none other than themselves

the effects are like mad cow's disease

except this time it's chicken  
strewn on the crosswalk  
right in front of where the sidewalk bends to meet the road

everyone walked around it and didn't watch  
while my mouth dragged open,  
Gasping- the fly away language of half humans

the pigeons were pecking  
Peg happy at the flesh of a close cousin  
and I'm wondering has it caught on?

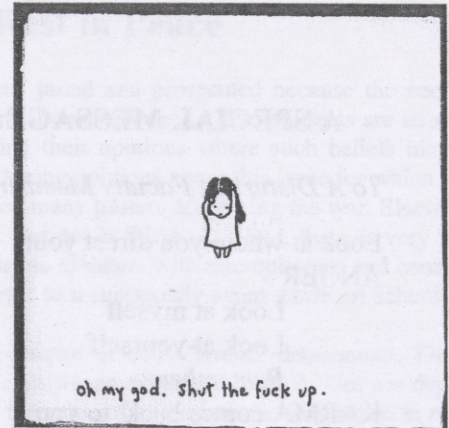
The need without exception. The vegetable eating vegetables.

Aaahh yes, it's the lobotomy recipient award

Intellect eating its pet name inspired food group

Maybe that's why I'm only half-human.  
Maybe that's the story of how half humans came to be.

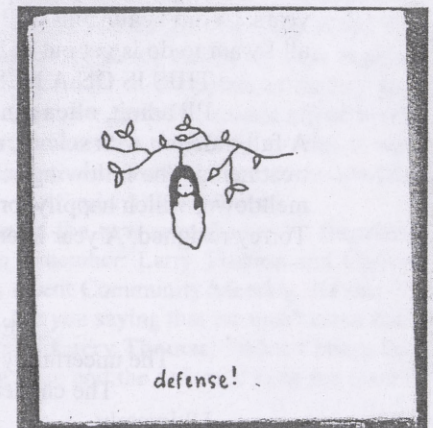
I've always been a bit accident prone- here's a list of a few of my injuries:  
chronically sprained ankles, ligament reconstructive ankle surgery, dislocated  
elbow, broken neck, broken tibia, sprained ACL, broken foot, hip tendonitis,  
shoulder bursitis, strained back... Lotus girl is part alter-ego, part entity all her  
own: the majority of Lotus Girl drawings deal with a kind of injury; sometimes  
masochistic, sometimes physical and always psychological. The extremity- and  
ultimate futility- of Lotus Girl's run-ins with physical harm widen the gap between  
physically tangible pain and highly toxic psychological pain. - Betsy Lam



b e t s y  
l a m



throwing up my arms



defense!



it's been done



## A SPECIAL MESSAGE:

*To A Disturbed Faculty Member*

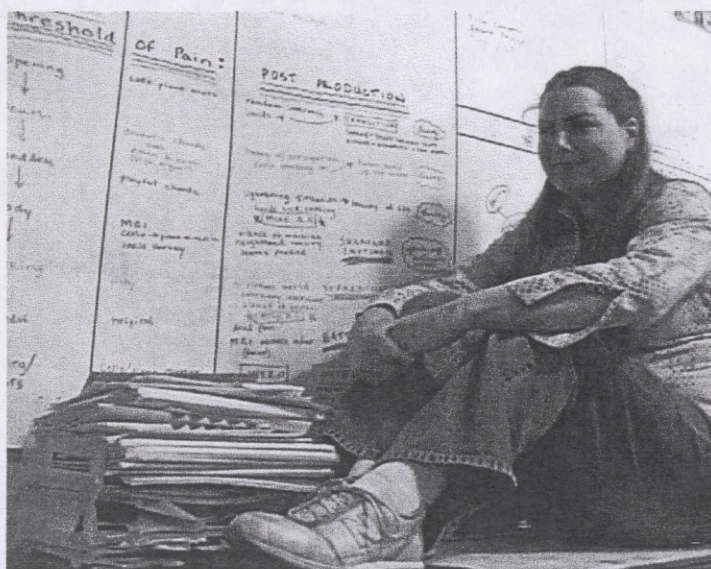
Look at where you direct your  
ANGER

Look at myself  
Look at yourself  
*Remember:*

KARMA comes back to you  
Vis-a-vis  
This is Energy to the universe

Peace be with you!

Sincerely,



*Simply A Contribution*



It's to be expected, a couple of weeks before graduation, something like this would happen; My Methods A grade being question by a certain faculty member. (It's strange that this wasn't mentioned at the beginning of the semester.) You could say I had it coming, considering I've been labeled a "rebel rouser," after organizing the Methods A Strike. You see, in my life, I've learned to be a fighter, not by choice, but because I've had too. My belief is that the strong always prey on the weak, but in doing so, they reveal their own vulnerability.

The battles fought have to be selective, otherwise the responsibility becomes unbearable. "Heather, right now, you have to take care of yourself." These are words Ray has echoed to me over the years. "Your health and well being are the most important, everything else doesn't matter." With that said, all I want to do is get out of here!

THIS IS ON A NEED TO KNOW BASIS: *Otherwise, Disclosed Information*

I'll admit, often times I take on more than I should and in the Fall of 2001, there was no exception; A full time job with school, not to mention, it was the first semester I started my weekly chemotherapy treatments. The following semester wasn't any better and sure enough, at the end of April I had a meltdown, which happily, brought me to my senses. In retrospect, this was at the same time Ella King Torrey resigned. A year later, this is what I reflect on;

FRAIL BEINGS

That's what we are

Even now

As I'm about to leave

The uncertainty of change is what eats at my insides

The challenge to overcome this

Ultimately

It's what can take you down

There are so many emotions

Rooted In

THE FEAR OF THE UNKNOWN

The only thing to do is stay grounded

expect the worst

After enough blows

you may start to recognize it

Maybe

if you're lucky

Some plans can be made

In my closing remarks, I'd like to thank all the wonderful teachers I've had; Anna, Dewey, Ernie, George, Kevin, Marion, Ray, & Robin, you've truly been my liberators. Jeff G., historian guru, it was a pleasure serving on the committee, GO TASK FORCES! To the Film Crew, just give me a little more time, I'll get you 'yo money, I promise....After all, I know how the department works and I wouldn't want you banging on my door. Bon Voyage MRW and all the rest of the grads departing. To those left behind, well.... God help your souls....Be seeing you! Heather Gold [hgold313@yahoo.com](mailto:hgold313@yahoo.com)



## Editorial Opinion: Ella King Torrey, Rest in Peace



SFAI students have recently risked police beatings, been jailed and prosecuted because the need to express their opinions about the war outweighed such brutal consequences. Other students are strongly in support of the war. I applaud their courage in voicing their opinions where such beliefs may be unpopular. Clearly there are many people here that have strong opinions about this issue for which they are not afraid to fight. But not here. At CCAC, I have seen many posters addressing the war. Elsewhere in the world there have been vocal campus wide rallies. But not at SFAI. At SFAI, there is very little indication that there was any war at all, no fliers on walls, no speakers with microphones, and certainly no campus wide rallies. Why? Why is it that students come to a supposedly avant garde art school and oddly choose to express themselves somewhere else?

My feeling is that SFAI students cultivate an exterior of cool, "ironic" detachment. This is surely amplified by the fact that we come here to be fine artists, an occupation which does not depend on the attainment of an easily verifiable skill set. Instead the value of a fine artist is determined in many ways by the opinions of the art community - all the better reason not to stick your neck out. This is all very fine if the origin of the cool-ironic-detached pose serves one. But what if it doesn't? What if something's underneath it, something that poisons instead of protects? Take a look at the old student newspapers. They are full of SFAI students speaking up about having a spirit that will not be broken. The cool ironic attitude seems to have grown sharply in the last decades - just as the school was coming under an increasingly authoritarian administration. The next time you assume this posture, ask yourself this: maybe it's not serving you at all, maybe it is simply an excuse, an opiate you secrete to alleviate pain - the pain of knowing that you have learned to live your life on your knees.

As the WASC accreditation report states, "from all accounts, the nature of university governance was very top down under the previous administration . . . This created a high level of distrust and a violation of basic shared governance behaviors." What this also created was humiliation and resignation, the feeling your voice counts for nothing. This feeling translates easily into detachment. It is much better to keep your mouth shut because you are cool, ironic and detached rather than weak, ignored and beaten. But somewhere the rug burns across your self respect still burn. How ironic are you going to feel when you realize you're footing the bill for six-figure administrators who don't know your name, who will live well while you are washing dishes to pay off student loans? Less than half of the total expenditures of SFAI are for instruction. In 1962 there were 2000 students and three administrators. Somewhere, someone is laughing themselves silly over your detachment, wondering how long they can continue to milk their obedient little cash cows.

Ella King Torrey recently took her own life. Despite the strained eulogies, her death is connected to her failure here. Could the failure worth extinguishing a life have happened in isolation? How many small acts of cowardice, greed and complacency set the stage? The student body had the least information but nothing to lose and everyone knew *something* was wrong. The faculty knew more but they stood to lose their jobs. On the other hand, they gave up Department Heads voluntarily for the ability of teaching more contact hours. They should have known. Of course the administration kept saying "yes" as long as the paychecks kept swelling. The Board of Trustees empowered a possibly imbalanced individual (how many people said "She's crazy") and then looked the other way while she took risks with money. How many people felt themselves make that funny little misstep behind their eyeglasses, deforming their dignity, and allowing themselves to look the other way perpetually? Everyone. Ella did not rise alone; she stood in the palms of flattery and cowardice, until all hands retracted in unison and her feet whipped thin air. Ella will rest in peace now; we can't. We cannot afford to tell ourselves the problem is gone with her and to return to our blinkered, complacent existences. It is time to return SFAI to what it was meant to be - a radical avant garde art school, a clearing where restrained voices are free. It is time to demonstrate the compassion that declares itself harshly in forthright criticism and to remember that this is for the sake of everyone - *particularly* the criticized.

**Business:** Summertime is when the SFAI Administration traditionally gets ready to ring in the new school year by forgetting promises and getting rid of those who annoy them. With this in mind, here are some things to remember: Larry Thomas and Chrissy Godfrey promised to keep the store and Pete's intact as recorded in the following excerpt from a recent Community Meeting. **Kevin:** "A petition was made out to keep Pete's cafe and I feel that the student body has spoken on this issue. Are you saying that we won't come back and find out that the student store or the cafe is gone?" **Chrissy Godfrey** "It won't be gone this fall." **Larry Thomas:** "What Chrissy laid out for you is a one year plan for both operations" **Kevin:** "Are we to understand that the student store and the cafe will keep the current work force?" **Chrissy Godfrey** "Yes."

**Ed Patuto** has been a busy man working against free expression at SFAI. He asked that members of Student Union that had worked on the SFAI Underground News not attend a planned meeting with the Board of Trustees, that Student Union not fund the newspaper if it was going write negative articles about the Board, and had his secretary attempt to get provocative issues taken off the agenda for a Community Meeting. Furthermore, he has disallowed several students from viewing or copying public information pertaining school finances, such as Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes, 990 Tax forms and current financial audits. Of course when pressed he says he was merely "voicing concerns." For his services, Ed makes three times as much as a member of the SFAI Resident Faculty.

**Jon Lang** was the darling of the King-Torrey/Thomas leadership. Somehow he rose to great heights while earning the worst scores on student evaluations. Last semester his behavior necessitated a strike of his Methods A class and generated a petition on which 35 students asked that he no longer teach at SFAI (and there were only roughly 40 in his class.) Letters were collected stating in no uncertain terms that he was not someone SFAI students wanted to learn from. So many students tried to drop his course that many had to be forced back in. Despite all of this, which has been made a matter record, he is teaching Methods A again. What other business could show such blatant disregard for their customer's wishes and expect them to come back for more? **Boycott Jon Lang's Methods A**



